



IV. Committee Activities

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House Committee on Natural Resources

Background

The Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Doc Hastings of Washington, considers legislation about American energy production, mineral lands and mining, fisheries and wildlife, public lands, oceans, Native Americans, irrigation and reclamation. Congressman Benishek was named to the House Committee on Natural Resources on January 5, 2011. The Congressman selected the Natural Resources Committee because he felt it would be an issue area that could benefit Michigan's First Congressional District. In addition to serving on the full Committee, the Congressman is a member of the Subcommittees on Energy and Mineral Resources and Indian and Alaskan Native Affairs.

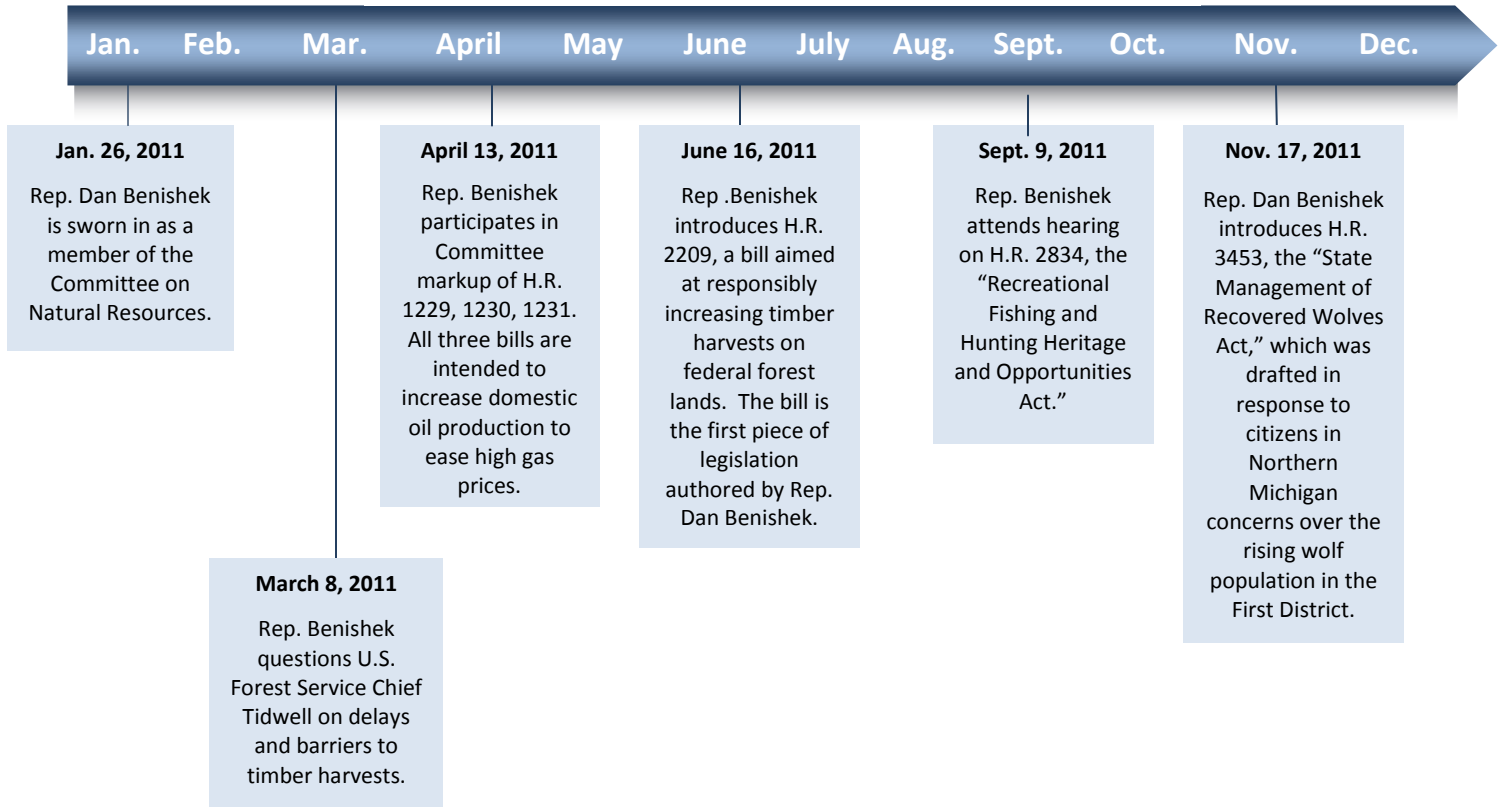
Key Hearings and Actions Taken

- Markup of "Putting the Gulf of Mexico Back to Work Act" (H.R. 1229), "Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act" (H.R. 1230), and "Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act" (H.R. 1231). These three bills would increase the domestic supply of oil, create jobs, and lead to lower prices at the pump. All three bills passed the full House in May.
- Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 2834, "Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act." Rep. Benishek's legislation ensures access for hunters and anglers on Federal Forest and BLM land.
- Subcommittee hearing on Rep. Huizenga's "Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Conservation and Recreation Act" (H.R. 977). Rep. Benishek cosponsored this legislation.
- During a markup on November 17, 2011, the full Committee passed H.R. 2834, the "Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act," by a bipartisan majority, 29-14. During the hearing, Benishek stated, "This is an important piece of legislation for my large Michigan district where many of my constituents enjoy hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits."
- On November 17, 2011, Rep. Benishek introduced H.R. 3453, the "State Management of Recovered Wolves Act," which was drafted in response to citizens in Northern Michigan concerns over the rising wolf population in the First District. In the early 1970's, Michigan's wolf population was estimated to be as low as 6 wolves in the Upper Peninsula. The combined population has exceeded 100 wolves every year since 1994 and currently includes more than 1,000 wolves. The bill was referred to the Natural Resources Committee.

2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Committee Activities

Timeline of Events Committee on Natural Resources - 112th Congress



House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

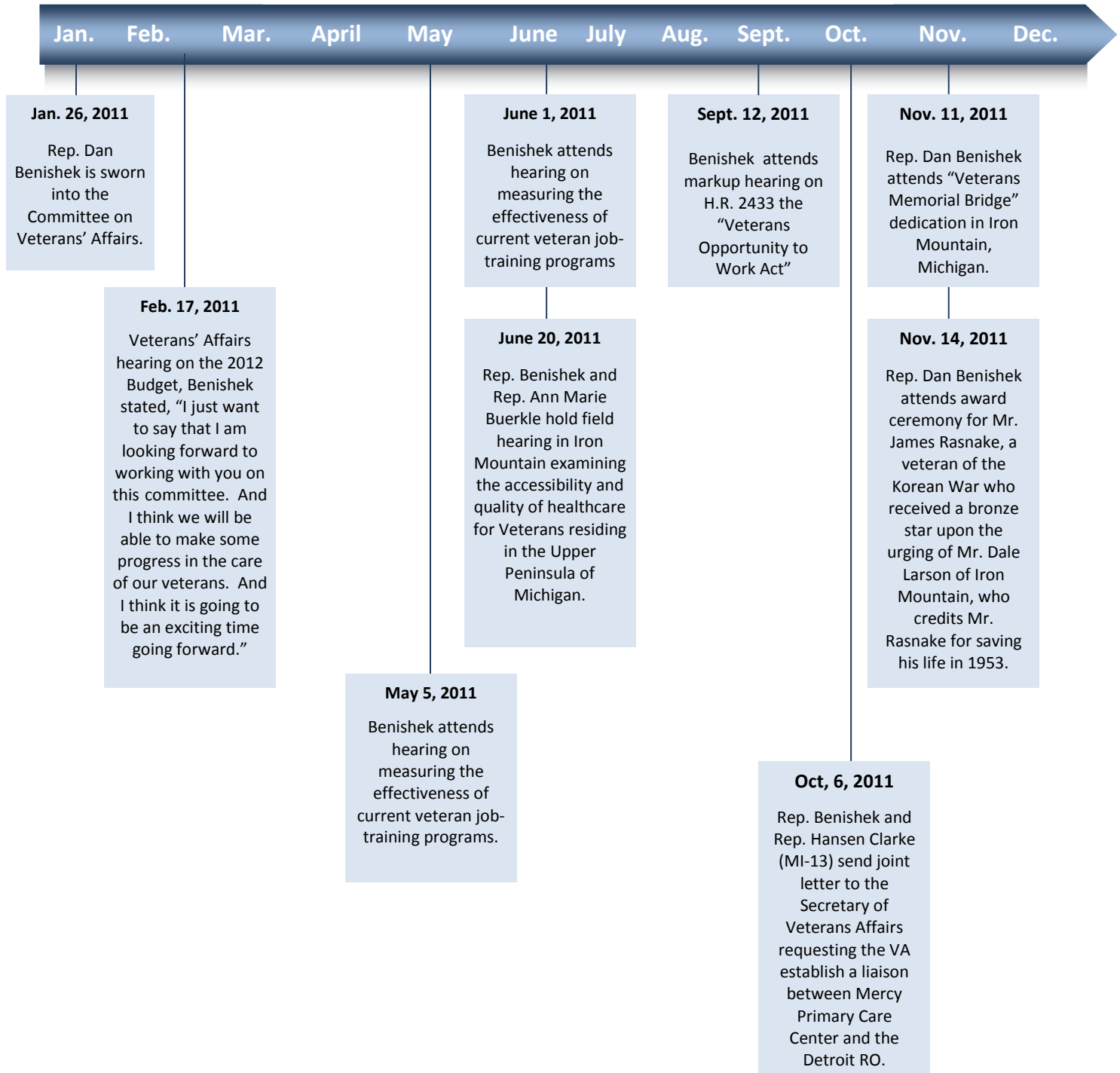
Background

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, chaired by Rep. Jeff Miller of Florida, reviews veterans' programs, examines current laws, and reports bills and amendments to strengthen existing laws concerning veterans, and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). With over 68,000 Veterans in Michigan's First District, and having worked as a VA physician for 25 years, the Veterans Committee was a natural choice for Congressman Benishek. Currently Congressman Benishek is the only member from the Michigan Delegation on the Veterans' Committee.

Key Hearings and Actions Taken

- Hearing on the "Veterans Opportunity to Work Act of 2011" (H.R. 2433), which establishes targeted assistance for eligible veterans to receive re-training for jobs in the new economy.
- At a Feb 17, 2011, Veterans' Affairs hearing on the 2012 Budget, Benishek stated, "I just want to say that I am looking forward to working with you on this committee. And I think we will be able to make some progress in the care of our veterans. And I think it is going to be an exciting time going forward."
- Markup hearing on the "Veterans Appeals Improvement Act of 2011" (H.R. 1484) which provides that if a veteran claimant or representative submits new evidence in support of a case for which a substantive appeal has been filed to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.
- Hearing on the "Veterans' Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services' Improvements Act of 2011" (H.R. 1855), which outlines the goal of maximizing independence and improving behavioral and mental health functioning within a program for veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI).
- Benishek took part in a field hearing on veterans' health care in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on June 20, 2011. The hearing examined the accessibility and quality of healthcare for veterans residing in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. At the hearing, Benishek stated, "When you bring a veterans' issue to the committee's attention, they listen; and they work with us to try and find solutions. That's why we're here today, to get an honest assessment of what needs to be improved with the VA health-care system to help our veterans in rural areas like the UP."

Timeline of Events Committee on Veterans' Affairs - 112th Congress



House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

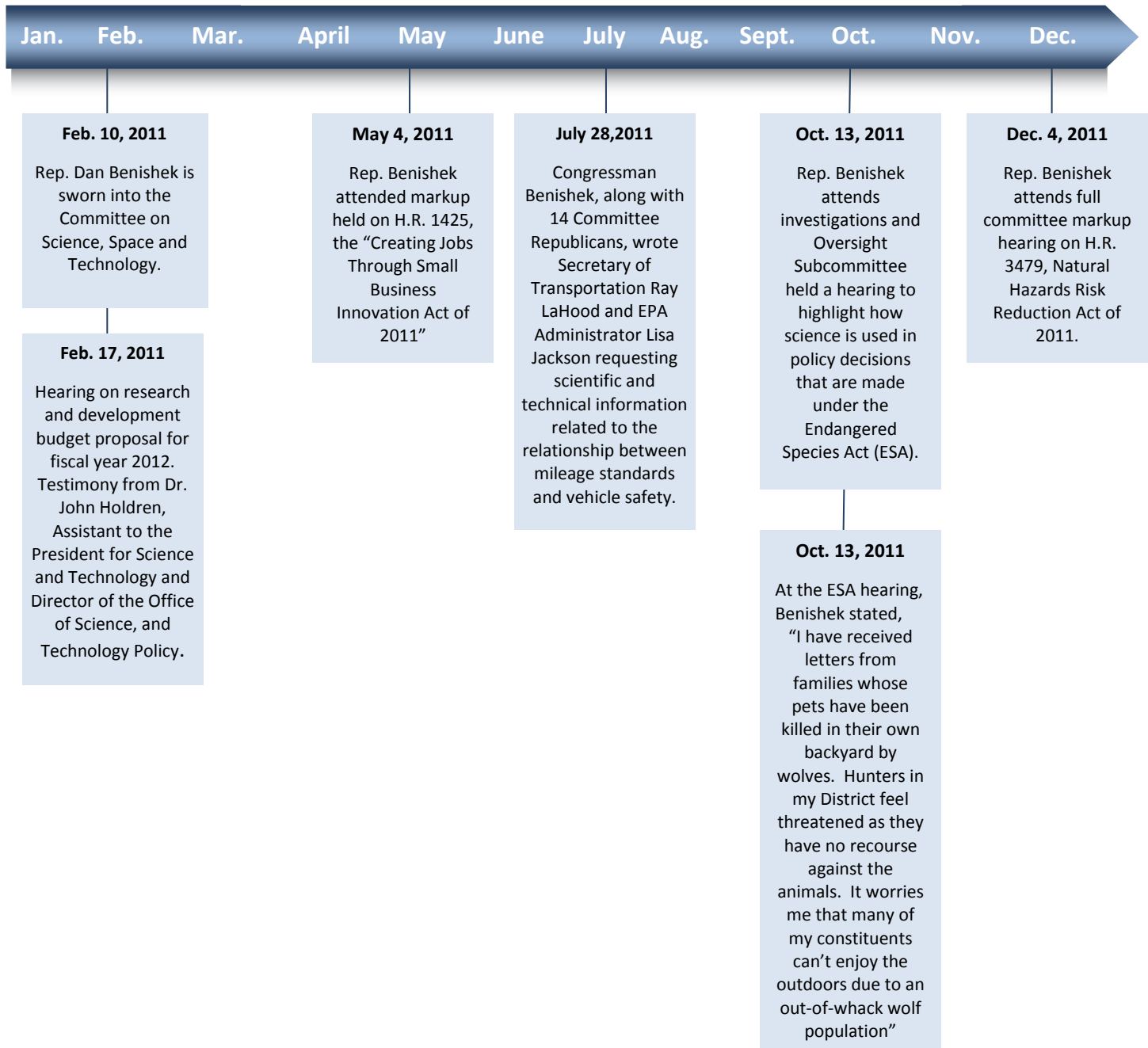
Background

The House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (SST), chaired by Rep. Ralph Hall of Texas, considers all laws, programs, and government activities relating to nonmilitary research and development, including NASA. As one of only two Michigan members, Congressman Benishek enjoys bringing the combination of his scientific background and Northern Michigander common sense approach to the Committee. In addition to serving on the full Committee, the Congressman is a member of the Subcommittees on Research and Science Education and Investigations and Oversight. Congressman Benishek was named to the Science, Space, and Technology Committee on February 10, 2011.

Key Hearings and Actions Taken

- Markup hearing on, the “Creating Jobs Through Small Business Innovation Act of 2011” (H.R. 1425). The purpose of this measure is to reauthorize the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs through 2014.
- The Committee held a hearing to review the technology and practices of hydraulic fracturing for energy production. The hearing focused on the role of domestic shale gas in meeting growing energy demand and associated concerns related to managing potential risks to drinking water resources. The Congressman questioned panel members providing testimony, including Mr. Harold Fitch of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Ground Water Protection Council.
- In response to President Obama’s call to nearly double Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards, Congressman Benishek, along with 14 Committee Republicans, wrote Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson requesting scientific and technical information related to the relationship between mileage standards and vehicle safety.
- The Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee held a hearing to highlight how science is used in policy decisions that are made under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). During the hearing, Congressman Benishek questioned Mr. Gary Frazer, Assistant Director, Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, about the delisting process for the grey wolf in Northern Michigan.

Timeline of Events Committee on Science, Space, and Technology - 112th Congress



GOP Doctors' Caucus

Background

Since its formation in March 2009, the GOP Doctors Caucus continues to play an effective role in protesting the largest overhaul of our nation's health care system in history. Created by Dr. Phil Gingrey, M.D. (R-GA) and Dr. Tim Murphy, Ph.D (R-PA), the Caucus is composed of 21 medical providers in Congress who work to develop patient centered, patient driven healthcare reforms focused on quality, access, affordability, portability, and choice. Caucus Members work to utilize their unique experiences and medical expertise to help reform and strengthen the health care system in the United States while representing the views of their communities.

Key Actions Taken

- **Challenging Obamacare:** The first step to enacting meaningful reform is to repeal Obamacare, a law which ensures the government takeover of our healthcare system. Congressman Benishek, along with other Members of the Doctors Caucus, voted in favor of H.R. 2, "Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act" on January 19, 2011. One of the first pieces of legislation introduced in the 112th Congress, it repeals the PPACA. The bill has not been acted upon by the Senate. There have also been recent court cases ruling on specific portions of the health care law, such as one before the 11th The Supreme Court has recently announced its intention to hear oral arguments regarding the individual mandate in March 2012. More recently, Congressman Benishek and fellow Committee Members have applauded the Obama Administration's decision to end the provisions of the CLASS Act included in ObamaCare, and look forward to a full repeal.
- **Creation of High Risk Pools:** The recent health care bill signed into law favors enacting high risk pools – but only temporarily as it would be set to expire in 2014 under the Senate bill. Northern Michiganders are disappointed that Obamacare will increase health care spending, increase taxes on small businesses, kill jobs, and eliminate Medicare Advantage coverage for millions of senior citizens. Congressman Benishek is considering introducing an alternative plan, the "Healthy Savings Act of 2011" that will provide Michiganders with a healthier alternative—access to their doctors and treatments with less interference from insurance companies and special interest groups, allowing for a doctor-patient relationship that is truly protected.
- **Medical Liability Reform:** Our nation's doctors need to be protected. The GOP solutions will help end frivolous and expensive lawsuits that end up costing physicians nationwide their careers. Republican ideas also would curb defensive medicine by enacting limits on punitive and non-economic damages, enforcing appropriate standards for awarding those damages, limiting attorney fees, setting forth requirements for proportional or 'fair share' liability, and

establishing a reasonable statute of limitations. Congressman Benishek has cosponsored H.R. 5, the “Help Efficient, Accessible, Low-cost, Timely Healthcare (HEALTH) Act of 2011” which seeks to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system.

- **Medicare and Medicaid Reform:** Before Obamacare, Medicare and Medicaid had not seen any major reforms since coming into existence in 1965. It takes an act of Congress to make changes to these government-run programs, but Obamacare was the wrong act. These programs are fraught with fundamental flaws: hundreds of billions of dollars in waste, limited or no help to prevent illnesses, no funding to manage chronic conditions, and frequent fraud and abuse. Disease management and preventative care programs would be major cost savers as 95% of Medicare costs. A blue ribbon panel of experts needs to be established to review Medicare and Medicaid from top to bottom, determine what works and what does not, and make recommendations for reforms. Congressman Benishek has supported these efforts by cosponsoring, along with other members of the Doctors Caucus, H.R. 452, the “Medicare Decisions Accountability Act of 2011.”
- **Purchasing Health Insurance Across State Lines:** Currently, health insurance shopping is limited to within a state’s boundaries, while there are sizeable cost disparities between states. A family purchasing a health insurance policy in Wisconsin might pay about \$3,087, but the same policy in New Jersey would cost \$10,398. Giving people more options and allowing them to shop for a health insurance policy will create competition, and lower costs. According to the survey, 70 percent responding would like the opportunity to shop for insurance across state lines. The new healthcare law, however, does not give people this option. The Congressman is currently reviewing legislative options with members of the Doctors Caucus to resolve this issue.
- **SGR/Medicare Physician Payment Fix:** Medicare is the largest health program run by the government, and it is currently in serious trouble. The sustainable growth rate (SGR) is a method that dictates how much the government will compensate physicians for specific services. Over the past decade, physicians who care for Medicare patients have been getting reimbursed less each year – and Congress continues to only temporarily fix this SGR problem. The next cuts to physician reimbursement are scheduled for December 31, 2011, and they will result in a 29% cut if Congress does not act. On top of this, Obamacare slashes funding to the Medicare program by more than \$500 billion, which will ultimately leave patients without doctors to care for them. Congressman Benishek is committed to working with members of the Doctors Caucus to enact a permanent solution to the flawed SGR payment formula for the benefits of physicians and the patients they serve.